



pickerel frog

Rana palustris

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Amphibia
Order:	Anura
Family:	Ranidae

Features

The pickerel frog ranges from 1 3/4 to three inches long. The body is gray or tan. The concealed parts of the hind legs, and often the belly, have a wash of bright yellow color. It has two parallel rows of square or rectangular brown or black blotches along the back between the yellow dorsolateral folds (two parallel folds of skin that run down the back). No other Iowa frog has paired squarish dorsal blotches.

Natural History

The pickerel frog lives in permanent water that is not warm or sluggish, such as mouths of caves, ponds, creeks, marshes, and cold springs. It may wander into grassy areas in summer. It eats arthropods (spiders, insects, mites, etc.) and mollusks (snails, slugs, etc.). This frog is a wary, alert, powerful jumper. Secretions from glands in its skin make this frog distasteful to many organisms. The pickerel frog spawns in spring in lakes, ponds, and backwater areas of rivers and streams. The male's call is a short, low-pitched snore

with little carrying power and it often calls while underwater. The female deposits 1,000 to 2,000 eggs in globular masses. Eggs hatch in about two weeks. Transformation to froglets occurs by the end of summer. The pickerel frog is found in eastern Iowa in a band of about two counties wide in northern Iowa, but only one county wide in the south along the Mississippi River.

Habitats

Interior rivers & streams; Mississippi River; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

Iowa Status

common, native

Iowa Range

eastern one-third of Iowa

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.